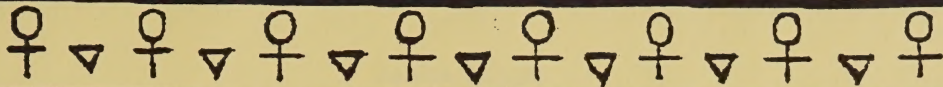


The Women's Secretariat



Greetings from The Women's Secretariat!

We are writing to invite the women of your congregation to District Conference. District Conference is a great opportunity for leadership development for the women in your church.

TWS is offering a great workshop on building bridges between the men's and women's communities. We will also have an opportunity for a Women's Secretariat caucus to discuss topics of interest to us. Conference begins on Friday so that we have extra time for sharing and learning.

Remember the congregation that registers the most number of women gets to take home the beautiful TWS banner to display in their church for the next six months. Other than Conference being in wonderful Wilmington, NC that is the best motivator for high attendance!

If you have any questions, please contact us - we are here for your support.

See you in November.

Libby Puckett (704) 529-5957
Margie Walker (615) 688-4980

...AND WE'RE G.L.A.D.

—Gulf Lower Atlantic District—

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be GLAD in it." Psalms 118:24

Wanda Floyd
GLAD Representative
PO Box 14051
RTP, NC 27709

Rev. Marge Ragona
PO Box 101473
Birmingham, AL 35210

Dear Marge,

Greetings in the name of God!!!

I hope by now that you are getting settled in your duties at church and that you are doing well. I also pray that Shirley is doing well. She is in my thoughts and prayers as well as you.

I am finally getting around to responding to the review packet that you submitted. I am sorry that it took so long to get back with you. Overall, the committee was pleased with your report. Thanks for taking the time, in the midst of everything, to get the information to us. One area that we want to express some caution is with the teenagers. Just to be mindful of what you can and cannot do for teenagers. We hope that in planning groups for teenagers, that you will have co-facilitator as a means of checks and balances.

Thanks, again, for your material. If you have any questions, just give me a call (919) 859-9413.

Take care and give my best to Shirley.

Peace in Christ,

Wad.

Wanda Floyd



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HERE IT IS!!!! YOUR WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!!!

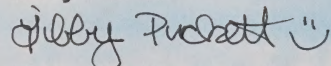
Dear Clergy, Student Clergy, Pastoral Leader & Worship Leader,

The Women's Secretariat is working on making this publication a channel of sharing information for the women in our churches throughout the GLAD District, and we need you to help us by passing this newsletter along to the women in your church. You are important to us, because you are helping us begin a new way that our women will be able to communicate what is happening in their churches with their sister churches throughout the district.

Would you please pass this newsletter along to the women in your church (feel free to make copies). Please share this newsletter also with the men in your church. We want them to know what is happening with their sisters in Christ through out the district.

**PLEASE PRAY WITH US THAT THIS WILL BE A SUCCESS!!!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND FOR YOUR HELP!!!!**

Libby Puckett



Chair, The Women's Secretariat

PLEASE CALL 1-800-685-7240 PIN 8137...so we will be assured you received this newsletter....THANKS!!!

The Women's Secretariat Newsletter

A Quarterly Publication of
The Women's Secretariat, GLAD District

MARCH, 1996

THE WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT... WHERE DID IT ALL BEGIN?

At the 1989 General Conference, many women joined their voices in asking General Council to create a Fellowship program centered on the gifts, needs, specific concerns, and issues of women in UFMCC.

In October 1990 such a program was created by General Council. A Steering Committee was appointed by the Elders to develop and facilitate the program's growth. The Steering Committee and our Women Elders met to dialogue about the development of the program for women that very first meeting in October 1990.

Rev. Elder Jean White suggested we consider using the name "Secretariat", which is a much more recognizable term internationally than a term such as "commission". Thus, **The Women's Secretariat (TWS)** was birthed.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of The Women's Secretariat of UFMCC, is to recognize the gifts and power that women contribute to the fellowship and to the world.

GOALS

The goals of TWS are:

- 1) to provide a framework for all women to support, heal, nurture, and empower one another, and
- 2) to recognize and work to eliminate all barriers to the full participation of women at the local church, district, and fellowship levels.

The TWS Symbol was adopted by the women of the GLAD District at the Spring Conference in Johnson City, Tennessee. Whenever you see this symbol in the future, know that The Women's Secretariat Program is involved in some way.



*When you feel that you have reached the end
And that you cannot go one step further,
when life seems to be drained of all purpose,
what a wonderful opportunity to start all over again,
to turn over a new page.*
Eileen Caddy

*Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith,
love, endurance and gentleness.*



The Women's Secretariat of The GLAD District

Is a Program offered by The
Universal Fellowship of
Metropolitan Community
Church
(UFMCC)

*We believe in recognizing the
gifts of the women of the
Gulf Lower Atlantic District and
empowering them to use these
gifts to reach out to those in
their community.*

Libby Puckett, Chair
4019 Teakwood Drive
Charlotte, NC 28217
(704)529-5957
(704)529-6117 (FAX/in home)
1-800-685-7240/PIN 8137

MaryEllen Dowdy, Co-Chair
778 Ray's Road, Suite 100
Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083
(404)297-0350

CALLING YOUR OWN WORKSHOPS

By MaryEllen Dowdy

So! Imagine you go to a conference and there is not one workshop you find interesting. How very boring!!!

WEELLLLLLLLLLLLL!!!! Here is an opportunity to give us some suggestions on workshops you would like to see at conferences. We all have areas in our lives that we wonder about and some of those things we all have in common. What a wonderful way to get some of our questions answered by dialoguing with others about that subject.

One of the big ones for me is the transgendering issue. I'm not sure I understand all of it, in fact I'm sure I don't. My Pastor, Rev. Shepherd, has a friend who is the director of AEGIS (American Education Gender Information Services) and she said she would be more than happy to come and do a workshop on transgendering.

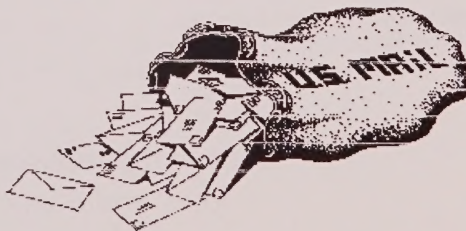
I think TWS needs to look at this issue and talk about it since we have a responsibility to not only be informed but also to welcome these "new" women into our group.

Please let Libby and I know any suggestions you have for workshops at upcoming conferences. We will do all we can to see that they happen. Hope to see alot of you in Nashville.

MAILING LIST

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ON THE
MAILING LIST OF THE WOMEN'S
SECRETARIAT NEWSLETTER? IF SO,
PLEASE SEND YOUR ADDRESS TO
LIBBY. INCLUDE YOUR NAME,
ADDRESS, AND THE CHURCH YOU
ATTEND.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING
FROM YOU!!!



MY FIRST EXPERIENCE

By Karen Harris, TWS Rep
Christ Covenant MCC
Stone Mountain, Georgia

On October 6, 1995 during a Congregational meeting, I was presented with a unique opportunity. I, Karen Harris, was chosen to represent Christ Covenant Metropolitan Community Church at the District Conference as The Women's Secretariat Representative. Thoughts must truly be things, because no sooner had I said to myself, "I wish I could do something at this conference", than Joy Callahan, a long time friend and member of Christ Covenant, nominated me and I accepted.

After getting through the initial excitement, my thought was, "can I as a straight woman truly make a viable contribution to my church in this role?" I wanted to more than anything because the love, acceptance and healing I have received at Christ Covenant has been unlike anything I have ever experienced in any church I have attended, and my church affiliations have been many. I decided to "turn off my head", turn on my heart and go for it!

The Women's Secretariat is a relatively new program with the Metropolitan Community Church. The possibilities for services to women and growth for the district are considerable. The first meeting was Friday evening November 17, 1995 at 10:00 p.m. Initial business was handled, elections were held and a discussion was begun about the most appropriate time for TWS Meetings to be held in the future. The following morning, November 18, 1995, communication strategies were developed to forge ties throughout the GLAD community.

My experience in being part of this conference can be summed up in one word: STUPENDOUS! The meetings were both "consciousness expanding" and FUN! One in particular...exploring gender issues I had never realized existed. While I initially felt silly when asking a question, I knew this was my opportunity to get over my fears of seeming DUMB, and being self-protective, to just be Karen. Amazingly, when I allowed myself to be just Karen, I discovered to my great joy how much love, and real fellowship can be experienced. I cannot believe that a year and a half ago I did not know that Metropolitan Community Churches even EXISTED because a cornerstone of my spiritual growth has occurred at Christ Covenant MCC culminating in my appointment as TWS Representative. I look forward to the year ahead serving my church in this role.

Spiritual love is a position of standing with one hand extended into the universe and one hand extended into the world, letting ourselves be a conduit for passing energy.

Christina Baldwin

WHO, ME?

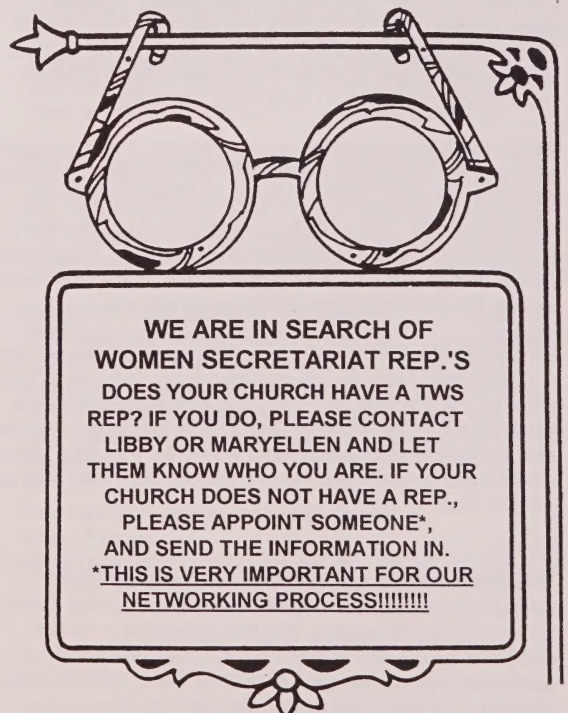
Matthew 3:13-17

Jesus went to John the Baptist seeking to be baptized. John, feeling woefully inadequate to wash Jesus, said, "Who, me?" "Yes, you!" said Jesus.

So it is with us. Surprised by the call, befuddled by the voice we hear within, we ask God, "Who, me?" "Yes, you!" says God, and the journey begins. An awesome invitation, an amazing responsibility, a humbling realization that things will never be seen in the same way again.

"Jesus calls us to the way, the Sophia, the life. Grant us the wisdom to discern your voice, recognize your direction, and proceed on our journeys with courage and conviction. Amen."

(Taken from...Spirit Journey/A Walk Through Matthew)



"Going from the Valleys in Life to the Mountain Top Highs"

I remember singing the song "The Old Rugged Cross", and the next thing I knew I found myself standing in front of my Camp Director sharing with her that God was calling me into the ministry. That was nineteen years ago and here I am now. I have traveled many roads with God, and we have shared many experiences with each other. **I have gone through the valleys of life as well as experiencing the mountain top highs.** One of the most memorable mountain top highs that I can remember was the day I walked into MCC Charlotte.

Hi, my name is Libby Puckett, and I am your new Chair of The Women's Secretariat. I live in Charlotte, NC (host of the Fall Conference '96). I attend and I am a member of MCC Charlotte (MCCC). I have sat on staff of this church, but at this time I do not hold any positions at MCCC. I love God with all my heart and being a part of this church has brought me closer to God!

I attended Southeastern Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC and graduated in the Spring of 1981 with a Masters Degree in Religious Education. I had all intentions of being a Youth Minister, but God had other plans. Although I am not working on staff in a church, I do have a ministry in and of itself...I work with two-and-a-half and three year old children. Many people have asked me why I am not working on staff in a church. My response to them has been...the right one has not come along...besides these children need all the love and attention they can get. I have been a 'surrogate mother' (for twelve years) to many children, and I have watched them grow in many different ways. I must say that it is never a dull moment!

Before I walked through the doors of MCCC, I was experiencing the inner struggle of dealing with my sexuality and being Christian. (I am Southern Baptist since birth...so you may understand why I felt as if my life was turned upside down.) I kept telling myself that this cannot be possible. I can't have these feelings and still be a Christian. This is not how I was taught. There must be something wrong with me.

I prayed and prayed that God would give me an answer, and one day I found myself walking through the doors of MCCC. I knew for the first time, in a very long time that there was a place for me in the house of God. I knew that after many trials and tribulations God had brought me home. I found a place where it didn't matter who I loved, but what did matter was my love for God.

That was five years ago, and I know more today than I did back during those struggling times, that God has called me to a wonderful ministry. She has called me to be her disciple to go out and to reach out to those who are in our community who still struggle on a daily basis, with the idea of being a Christian and being Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender.

This is why I feel so strongly about TWS. Our mission statement says: **"The purpose of The Women's Secretariat is to recognize the gifts and power that women contribute to the fellowship and to the world."**

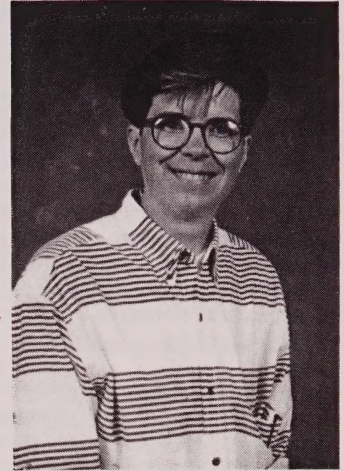
It took me a long time to receive my gifts from God, because I did not feel worthy enough to receive them. It was not until I walked through the doors of MCCC that I realized that I was worthy, and it was then that I truly felt my call to be God's servant...to reach out to those who do not feel worthy, and show them that God loves them just as they are.

I would like to share a poem with you that we read at The Women's Share at Fall Conference in Asheville:

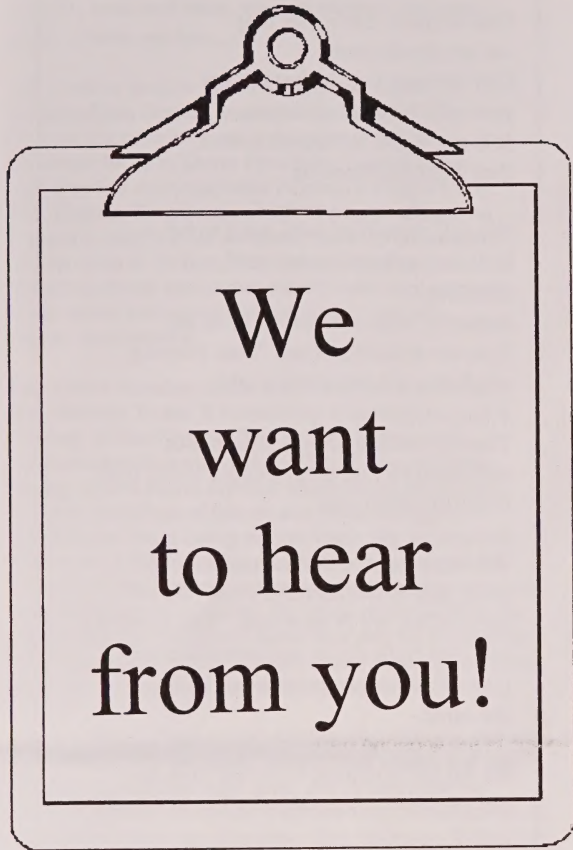
in the pattern of God's purpose
we are stitched together in caring and communion:
scraps of the lingering past,
fragments broken from future's dearest hopes;
textures of disappointment and dreams,
prints of pain and promise:
calico and corduroy,
stripes, silks, and satins --
all the colors of emotion and experience
are sewn
into a crazy quilt
of life,
patched together and transformed
into a blanket of love...
and our compassion
comforts
a cold and hurting world.

Barbara Battin

My dream for The Women's Secretariat is that we can grow from all of our experiences...that we can share our common thread of Christ's love for us, and become a blanket of love to comfort our cold and hurting world. I am excited about the things that are going to take place with the women in the GLAD District! I know God has many wonderful things in store for us. I hope and pray that you will become involved in TWS in your church, and become a part of this crazy quilt that is mentioned in the poem above.



(Continued on next page)



(Going from the Valleys in Life.....)

We are all like the different pieces of material that this poem mentions. We come from different places. We have experienced many different events in our lives. We have so much to offer. Just imagine how wonderful it would be for all of us to come together and share our experiences with each other, and the gifts that God has given to each one of us.

This is what The Women's Secretariat is all about... "recognizing the gifts and power that women contribute to the fellowship and the world." It is a time of sharing and a time of growing. **Get excited with us...get involved...become a part of The Women's Secretariat at your local church!**

Please pray with MaryEllen and myself as we begin this journey of leadership together. Pray that God will guide us to know what direction TWS needs to take in the GLAD District. Pray that we will see the visions that God would have us to see, and the knowledge to fulfill them. Especially pray that the women in the GLAD District and throughout the Fellowship may be touched by the ministry of The Women's Secretariat!

WE DO WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU....this newsletter is for you, the women of the GLAD District.

This newsletter has been discussed in several of our caucuses at District Conferences. You have asked that this newsletter become a reality...so here it is. You have asked for a way of keeping in touch with each other across our district. We hope this newsletter will provide you with the opportunity of keeping each other in touch with what God is doing in your church.

What do we want for our newsletter? We would like to hear what is going on with the women in your church. Do you have special programs for the women in your church....Potlucks, Women's Sharing, etc.? If so, share with us what programs are meeting the needs of the women in your church. We hope by sharing your information with us via this newsletter, other churches will be able to benefit from your programs as well.

What else do we want? As you can see in this newsletter, there are a few poems. Do you write? Do you have a poem you have written that you would like to share....then send it in. Maybe you have a poem that you have found that means something to you...share that with us. What has inspired you may inspire someone else. Maybe you have a devotion or meditation that holds a special place in your heart...would you be willing to share it with us? We want this newsletter to be your newsletter. If you have something that you feel other women would benefit from, please send it in.

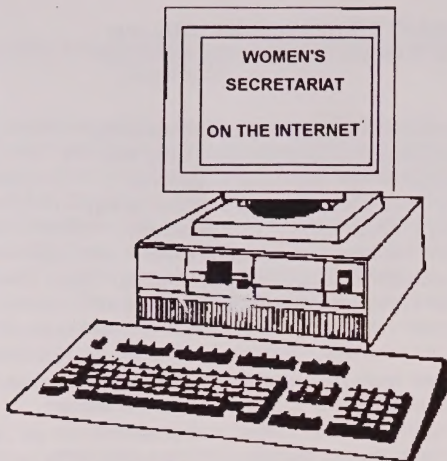
We are excited about this new program of The Women's Secretariat (GLAD District). This newsletter can be whatever you want it to be! We hope by making this newsletter a reality that you, the women of the GLAD District, will help us make it the best newsletter it can be.

We are trying to publish this newsletter once a quarter. This being our first publication, and wanting it to be the best it could be we were not able to meet our original deadline. However, our next deadline for material to be sent in is: **April 5, 1996**. We would like to have our next newsletter out before District Conference in Nashville.

You can send articles for the newsletter to:
Libby Puckett
4019 Teakwood Drive/Charlotte, NC 28217

When I am afraid,
I will trust in you.

Psalms 56:3 NIV



What an exciting idea! The Women's Secretariat on the InterNet! This idea was brought to us at the Women's Share (Fall Conference) by Beverly Mitzel who is a member at MCC Charlotte. As you read this article, you will find out about the "Cyberministry" that MCC Charlotte (MCCC) is working on and how it can benefit The Women's Secretariat (TWS).

MCCC has now entered into a new and evolving trend called "Cyberministry" by establishing an on-line presence via the Internet. MCCC will be able to join several other visionary MCC churches across the world in reaching many individuals with news and information about themselves, as well as the fellowship.

MCCC has been on-line since May of 1995, when it joined a group of other MCC's through virtual computer chat sessions via America On Line, and also through listing information about itself GLBT computer bulletin boards. It is here that Lynn Lavner heard of our church and got in touch with MCCC about doing a concert at their church. However, more recently MCCC has shown computer users a new "identity" by creating a "home page" accessed through a graphical interface to the Internet called the World Wide Web.

Through MCCC home page, users not only access information about MCC, including Worship Services, Ministries and Outreach, Newsletters and Calendars, but they may also access an entire listing of MCC's within the GLAD District, link directly to the UFMCC Fellowship's home page, and access a wide variety of community links of interest to the GLBT community.

Early statistics have indicated that the MCCC page is being accessed as many as 10 to 15 times per day by computer users worldwide. This number is sure to increase as word is spread that the page is up and has valuable information.

There already is in place, a "link" for information relating to The Women's Secretariat. This is a place for us to include information on TWS as well as place the newsletter. All we need to do is get the newsletter up and running, and we will be able to pass it on to Beverly who will plug it into the Internet.

This is going to be a great way for us to communicate with the women in our churches all around the world! If you are on line and would like to access this page, you may access the page through MCCC's temporary URL number. Their number on the Web is:

<http://www.geopages/West Hollywood/2326>

MCCC will be moving to a new address on a faster service by early spring.

If you have any questions, or need further information...please call Beverly Mitzel (704) 875-3325(h) or (704)547-2675(w) or via e-mail at: bamitzel@email.uncc.edu

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous - talented and fabulous?

Actually, who are you NOT to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world.

There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure about you.

We were born to make manifest the glory that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

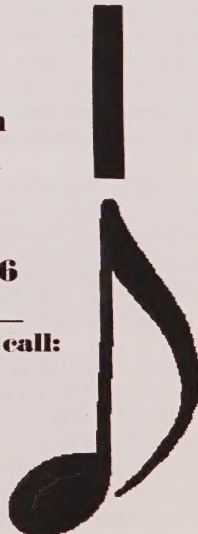
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

1994 Inaugural Speech
Nelson Mandela

LYNN LAVNER
in concert
at the Metropolitan
Community Church
of Charlotte

Friday, May 4, 1996

For more information call:
MCC-Charlotte
(704) 563-5810



"TOGETHER, women and women, men and women, men and men, we can change peoples ideas of who we are....."

Hell-o fellow people of the female persuasion. I am MaryEllen Dowdy, your new Co-chair of The Women Secretariat. I am a member of Christ Covenant MCC in Stone Mountain, Georgia, and I am also the Administrative Assistant to my Pastor Rev. Glenna Shepherd...which of course allows me to have a wealth of information, much to do, and not enough time to do it in. But, being "The Diva" (Congregational appointed name) that I am, I attend to my duties with great joy and style!...and of course competence.

I am also a member of our churches Finance Team and Worship Team. It is certainly a challenge to be a member of the Finance Team and come up with creative ways to make money, get money and keep money. I have found my own ideas about tithing and the inner workings of the church have changed dramatically since being on this team. My activity with the Worship Team brings me much pleasure and the creativity of the entire team makes our worship services very personal and magical. By virtue of my position as Administrative Assistant I somehow end up involved in much more than I ever planned to be, but I figure it's an easy ticket to heaven...so what the heck.

I have been in a committed relationship with my partner, Joy Callahan for six years, and if I don't make her too crazy, I hope for the next sixty. Joy is definitely the stabilizing factor in my life. I am the very proud mother of a seventeen year old daughter, Erin Kathleen. If God has ever blessed me, it is with this wonderful child.

I was raised in a devout Irish Catholic home the second child, first daughter of five. I went to Catholic School all my life, and pretty much bought the whole package that they sold me. I had been for a good part of my adult life what you would call a convenient Catholic, church at Easter and Christmas, and occasionally through out the year. I always felt a need to connect with a God who would love me no matter what and I also wanted the "High Liturgy" that the Catholic church does.

Communion has always been an important part for me because of my background and the belief in The Body and Blood of Christ. When I first learned of MCC and went to Christ Covenant I can't say I felt right at home but there was something there. Well, lo and behold here I am so immersed in the Fellowship that I wonder where I was before.

My spirituality comes from many different places and takes many different forms. One of the greatest sense of God's grace and love comes from my daughter, Erin. Music gives me a feeling of God's unending love and forgiveness, and serving and receiving communion is a powerful and joyous occasion for me.

As your co-chair, I have a great vision for TWS. I feel there are many areas which need to be looked at and examined by us as women and The Fellowship as a whole. One of these areas is Transgender people. Where do they belong? How do they feel about our group and being a part of it?

I would like to see workshops addressed to this issue from both men and women who are transgendering. There are many questions, I am sure, that people have regarding this issue. Lesbians are in a high risk category for breast cancer and I would like to see some workshops about this; it effects men as well as women when they lose their mothers, sisters, and friends to it.

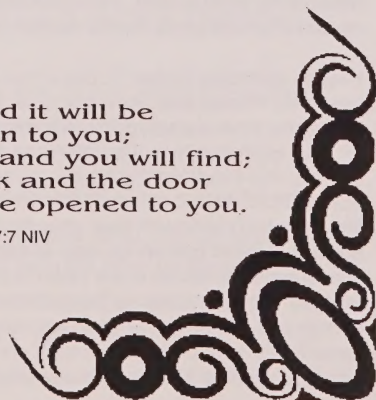
I hope that in the future the women of The Fellowship will find all the openness and love they need from The Fellowship collectively. I hope that the men will not see us as threatening and overbearing because we are outspoken and want to be heard. **TOGETHER , women and women, men and women, men and men, we can change peoples ideas of who we are** and they will come to know us as loving children of God just as we are.

I welcome the opportunity to serve you as your co-chair and I am always open to suggestions or ideas you have in regards to TWS. Please feel free to contact me at anytime, and thank you for giving me a chance to help build the vision of our future.



 Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Matthew 7:7 NIV



"When God Closes One Door, God Opens Another One"

GREETINGS MY SISTERS IN CHRIST! MY NAME IS

Wanda Y. Floyd...in the nine years of being a part of this Fellowship, I have come to truly believe those words. I stepped into St. John's MCC in Raleigh, NC the summer of 1987 and that is where I have stayed. I have seen a lot of changes in my local church, district, and Fellowship.

I grew up in a small town as a Southern Baptist and my speaking style reflects my upbringing. As a child growing up, I always felt that God had called me to be a part of the church in some way or another. As I grew up, my participation in church also grew from being in the choir, an usher, 4-H, Baptist Training Union, etc. The list can go on and on.

My time at St. John's MCC has been a true learning experience. I began attending during a transition period for the church and often times I would be the only Person of Color (POC) and/or woman. I felt like giving up alot of times, but God continued to give me strength and courage and the power to stay even when things were not the greatest in the world. I have seen the church almost double its women presence in the past two years and the presence of the POC's is also growing.

I feel blessed that I have found a place within this Fellowship where I can be a part of a growing, diverse congregation that continues to be on the forefront of things. Our church was the first church in our district to appoint a female POC as Associate Pastor (me) and is still the only one that can claim that fact. We have made deliberate efforts to reach out to the women in our congregation and community by having monthly potlucks, beach retreats (two a year), a monthly newsletter and a small group that is for women only. We also have a male Pastor who preaches on diversity and inclusivity. As a result, the presence of women continues to grow and is very stable.

At our last District Conference in Asheville, I ran for Assistant District Coordinator but was not appointed to this position. I was very disappointed and it showed. I had decided not to rerun for Lay Representative because of accepting my call into the ministry. However, **when that one door closed, God opened another one.** I am now one of six women that sit on the Facilitating Council for TWS for the Fellowship. As a result of my appointment, I was asked to share a little about my vision and/or goals for the women in this district.

I began attending District Conferences in Spring of 1990 and have only missed one since that time. As I attend, I continue to pray for more women at these conferences and especially for their participation in The Women's Secretariat (TWS). In the past few years, we have been having caucuses for the women to come and express their concerns and issues that they may be having with their churches, yet the number of present at these gatherings vary at each conference. TWS sponsored a workshop a few years ago entitled "Building Bridges" in which a female pastor of a predominantly female church and a male pastor of a predominantly male church came together to discuss how their churches made deliberate efforts to reach out to the opposite gender. It became

apparent in that gathering that one of our problems is the lack of education from on high on women issues. Meaning that if it is not preached from the pulpit, then not much will be done.

I truly feel that we need to educate our pastors and strong lay leadership about the needs of TWS and how our presence can benefit them as a church and us as a district. There were women in that workshop that questioned why they needed to be concerned about women issues or the presence of women at their churches. I was appalled that this statement was coming from another woman. It all goes back to education! We, as women, need to educate ourselves on how our gifts and talents can be used within this district. We are all strong women!

I would like to see the women own the power that God gives to us by seeking and accepting places of leadership within our local church and in our district. I would like to see more women at District Conference and participating more in the services. We continue to be the fastest growing district in our Fellowship, and I believe that we can also have the largest number of women working for God in our district.

As a part of the Facilitating Council, we are going to begin working more closely with the districts and offering our help whenever possible. I believe in this ministry. If I did not, I would not have accepted the appointment. I believe God can use each woman in this district to grow and to be about the business of sharing the Gospel with those that are hurting and lost, because My Sisters, that is what we are called to do.

Wanda Floyd

Associate Pastor - St. John's MCC, Raleigh NC
Facilitating Council for The Women's Secretariat for UFMCC

A Letter to My Sisters

*Strong sisters who have walked with me,
and wept and laughed and soared with me,
Can we not yet on this life's plane
reach out, and up and up again
until by reaching, soaring, searching
at last we find the prize of living life
through women's eyes?*

*And then by Love and Faith and Grace
we'll share with other waiting hearts
the treasures of this Women's Place.*

Deborah B. Sims



We would like to name this newsletter something other than The Women's Secretariat Newsletter.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!

We would like for you to help us name your newsletter. Do you have any ideas? If you do, we would like for you to mail them to us. (You can mail them to Libby or MaryEllen...addressess in front of newsletter.)

What do you think? Do you have a wonderful name for our newsletter? Send it in...you just might win! What will you win? If the name you have submitted should win, you will have one night of your hotel room paid at Spring Conference. (if you are unable to attend conference....other prizes will be available)

DEADLINE FOR SUGGESTIONS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY APRIL 15,1996...does that date ring a bell?

Thanks for helping us out...we can't wait to hear from you!!!!

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES
APRIL 5,1996

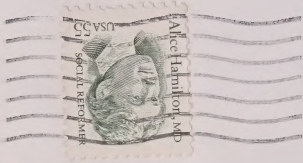
REACHING FOR RAINBOWS

I keep reaching for rainbows....
Thinking one God's morning
I will wake up with rainbow ribbons in my hair,
With hurts painted over in hues that only angel
wings could brush,
Black obliterated, chaos hurled beyond the
rainbow and my vision,
The world created in a myriad of colors:
The hungry fed,
The dying held,
The maimed walking,
The angry stroked,
The violent calmed,
The oppressed freed,
The oppressors changed,
And every tear wiped away.
I keep reaching for rainbows,
But instead of colors in our storm,
Gray and black infiltrate, dirtying the sky,
And I hear human voices wailing in the
darkness,
The never-ending darkness....
Just the same
I know the promise of the rainbow.
I keep thinking I'll turn a corner one day
And find a litany of rainbows
Flung across the sky,
Hosannaing back and forth
Through all the ages and
Out into eternity forever amen!
Every tear wiped away -
It's a promise -
When we become rainbows to each other.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What do you think about the first newsletter? Do you have any suggestions or ideas for us to try? We would like to hear from you!!! Write us and let us know what you would like to see in "your newsletter"....your ideas are VERY IMPORTANT TO US!

TUSCALOOSA PARISH EXT.
c/o Rev. Marge Ragona
PO BOX 101473
Birmingham, Alabama 35201



L. Puckett
Chair, The Women's Secretariat
4019 Teakwood Drive
Charlotte, NC 28217

*They that wait upon the Lord
shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings
as eagles; they shall run, and
not be weary; and they shall
walk, and not faint. Isaiah 40:31*



HERE IT IS!!!! YOUR WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!!!

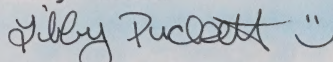
Dear Clergy, Student Clergy, Pastoral Leader & Worship Leader,

The Women's Secretariat is working on making this publication a channel of sharing information for the women in our churches throughout the GLAD District, and we need you to help us by passing this newsletter along to the women in your church. You are important to us, because you are helping us begin a new way that our women will be able to communicate what is happening in their churches with their sister churches throughout the district.

Would you please pass this newsletter along to the women in your church (feel free to make copies). Please share this newsletter also with the men in your church. We want them to know what is happening with their sisters in Christ through out the district.

**PLEASE PRAY WITH US THAT THIS WILL BE A SUCCESS!!!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND FOR YOUR HELP!!!!**

Libby Puckett



Chair, The Women's Secretariat

PLEASE CALL 1-800-685-7240 PIN 8137...so we will be assured you received this newsletter....THANKS!!!

The Women's Secretariat Newsletter

A Quarterly Publication of
The Women's Secretariat, GLAD District

MARCH, 1996

THE WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT... WHERE DID IT ALL BEGIN?

At the 1989 General Conference, many women joined their voices in asking General Council to create a Fellowship program centered on the gifts, needs, specific concerns, and issues of women in UFMCC.

In October 1990 such a program was created by General Council. A Steering Committee was appointed by the Elders to develop and facilitate the program's growth. The Steering Committee and our Women Elders met to dialogue about the development of the program for women that very first meeting in October 1990.

Rev. Elder Jean White suggested we consider using the name "Secretariat", which is a much more recognizable term internationally than a term such as "commission". Thus, **The Women's Secretariat (TWS)** was birthed.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of The Women's Secretariat of UFMCC, is to recognize the gifts and power that women contribute to the fellowship and to the world.

GOALS

The goals of TWS are:

- 1) to provide a framework for all women to support, heal, nurture, and empower one another, and
- 2) to recognize and work to eliminate all barriers to the full participation of women at the local church, district, and fellowship levels.

The TWS Symbol was adopted by the women of the GLAD District at the Spring Conference in Johnson City, Tennessee. Whenever you see this symbol in the future, know that The Women's Secretariat Program is involved in some way.



*When you feel that you have reached the end
And that you cannot go one step further,
when life seems to be drained of all purpose,
what a wonderful opportunity to start all over again,
to turn over a new page.*

Eileen Caddy

*Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith,
love, endurance and gentleness.*



The Women's Secretariat of The GLAD District

Is a Program offered by The
Universal Fellowship of
Metropolitan Community
Church
(UFMCC)

*We believe in recognizing the
gifts of the women of the
Gulf Lower Atlantic District and
empowering them to use these
gifts to reach out to those in
their community.*

Libby Puckett, Chair
4019 Teakwood Drive
Charlotte, NC 28217
(704)529-5957
(704)529-6117 (FAX/in home)
1-800-685-7240/PIN 8137

MaryEllen Dowdy, Co-Chair
778 Ray's Road, Suite 100
Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083
(404)297-0350

CALLING YOUR OWN WORKSHOPS

By MaryEllen Dowdy

So! Imagine you go to a conference and there is not one workshop you find interesting. How very boring!!!

WEELLLLLLLLLLLLL!!!! Here is an opportunity to give us some suggestions on workshops you would like to see at conferences. We all have areas in our lives that we wonder about and some of those things we all have in common. What a wonderful way to get some of our questions answered by dialoguing with others about that subject.

One of the big ones for me is the transgendering issue. I'm not sure I understand all of it, in fact I'm sure I don't. My Pastor, Rev. Shepherd, has a friend who is the director of AEGIS (American Education Gender Information Services) and she said she would be more than happy to come and do a workshop on transgendering.

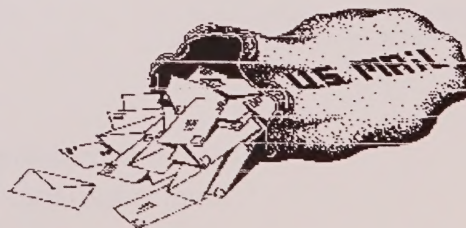
I think TWS needs to look at this issue and talk about it since we have a responsibility to not only be informed but also to welcome these "new" women into our group.

Please let Libby and I know any suggestions you have for workshops at upcoming conferences. We will do all we can to see that they happen. Hope to see alot of you in Nashville.

MAILING LIST

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ON THE
MAILING LIST OF THE WOMEN'S
SECRETARIAT NEWSLETTER? IF SO,
PLEASE SEND YOUR ADDRESS TO
LIBBY. INCLUDE YOUR NAME,
ADDRESS, AND THE CHURCH YOU
ATTEND.

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING
FROM YOU!!!**



MY FIRST EXPERIENCE

By Karen Harris, TWS Rep
Christ Covenant MCC
Stone Mountain, Georgia

On October 6, 1995 during a Congregational meeting, I was presented with a unique opportunity. I, Karen Harris, was chosen to represent Christ Covenant Metropolitan Community Church at the District Conference as The Women's Secretariat Representative. Thoughts must truly be things, because no sooner had I said to myself, "I wish I could do something at this conference", than Joy Callahan, a long time friend and member of Christ Covenant, nominated me and I accepted.

After getting through the initial excitement, my thought was, "can I as a straight woman truly make a viable contribution to my church in this role?" I wanted to more than anything because the love, acceptance and healing I have received at Christ Covenant has been unlike anything I have ever experienced in any church I have attended, and my church affiliations have been many. I decided to "turn off my head", turn on my heart and go for it!

The Women's Secretariat is a relatively new program with the Metropolitan Community Church. The possibilities for services to women and growth for the district are considerable. The first meeting was Friday evening November 17, 1995 at 10:00 p.m. Initial business was handled, elections were held and a discussion was begun about the most appropriate time for TWS Meetings to be held in the future. The following morning, November 18, 1995, communication strategies were developed to forge ties throughout the GLAD community.

My experience in being part of this conference can be summed up in one word: STUPENDOUS! The meetings were both "consciousness expanding" and FUN! One in particular...exploring gender issues I had never realized existed. While I initially felt silly when asking a question, I knew this was my opportunity to get over my fears of seeming DUMB, and being self-protective, to just be Karen. Amazingly, when I allowed myself to be just Karen, I discovered to my great joy how much love, and real fellowship can be experienced. I cannot believe that a year and a half ago I did not know that Metropolitan Community Churches even EXISTED because a cornerstone of my spiritual growth has occurred at Christ Covenant MCC culminating in my appointment as TWS Representative. I look forward to the year ahead serving my church in this role.

Spiritual love is a position of standing with one hand extended into the universe and one hand extended into the world, letting ourselves be a conduit for passing energy.

Christina Baldwin

WHO, ME?

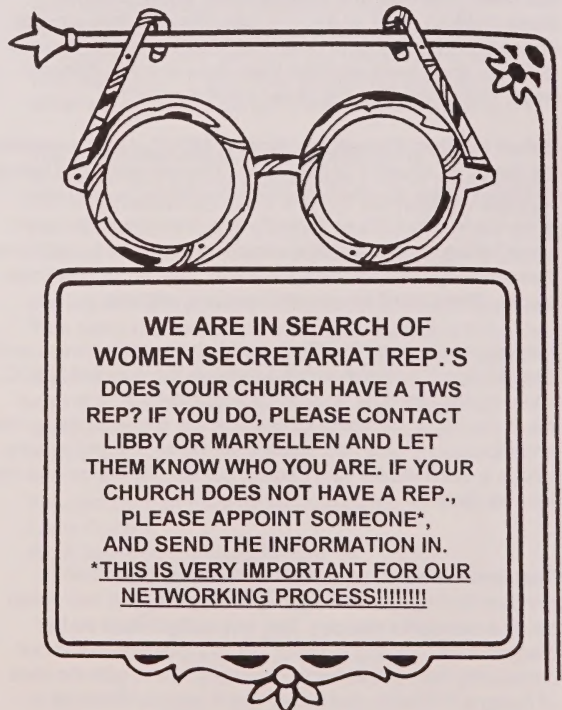
Matthew 3:13-17

Jesus went to John the Baptist seeking to be baptized. John, feeling woefully inadequate to wash Jesus, said, "Who, me?" "Yes, you!" said Jesus.

So it is with us. Surprised by the call, befuddled by the voice we hear within, we ask God, "Who, me?" "Yes, you!" says God, and the journey begins. An awesome invitation, an amazing responsibility, a humbling realization that things will never be seen in the same way again.

"Jesus calls us to the way, the Sophia, the life. Grant us the wisdom to discern your voice, recognize your direction, and proceed on our journeys with courage and conviction. Amen."

(Taken from...Spirit Journey/A Walk Through Matthew)



**WE ARE IN SEARCH OF
WOMEN SECRETARIAT REP.'S
DOES YOUR CHURCH HAVE A TWS
REP? IF YOU DO, PLEASE CONTACT
LIBBY OR MARYELLEN AND LET
THEM KNOW WHO YOU ARE. IF YOUR
CHURCH DOES NOT HAVE A REP.,
PLEASE APPOINT SOMEONE*,
AND SEND THE INFORMATION IN.
*THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR OUR
NETWORKING PROCESS!!!!!!!**

"Going from the Valleys in Life to the Mountain Top Highs"

I remember singing the song "The Old Rugged Cross", and the next thing I knew I found myself standing in front of my Camp Director sharing with her that God was calling me into the ministry. That was nineteen years ago and here I am now. I have traveled many roads with God, and we have shared many experiences with each other. **I have gone through the valleys of life as well as experiencing the mountain top highs.** One of the most memorable mountain top highs that I can remember was the day I walked into MCC Charlotte.

Hi, my name is Libby Puckett, and I am your new Chair of The Women's Secretariat. I live in Charlotte, NC (host of the Fall Conference '96). I attend and I am a member of MCC Charlotte (MCCC). I have sat on staff of this church, but at this time I do not hold any positions at MCCC. I love God with all my heart and being a part of this church has brought me closer to God!

I attended Southeastern Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC and graduated in the Spring of 1981 with a Masters Degree in Religious Education. I had all intentions of being a Youth Minister, but God had other plans. Although I am not working on staff in a church, I do have a ministry in and of itself...I work with two-and-a-half and three year old children. Many people have asked me why I am not working on staff in a church. My response to them has been...the right one has not come along...besides these children need all the love and attention they can get. I have been a 'surrogate mother' (for twelve years) to many children, and I have watched them grow in many different ways. I must say that it is never a dull moment!

Before I walked through the doors of MCCC, I was experiencing the inner struggle of dealing with my sexuality and being Christian. (I am Southern Baptist since birth...so you may understand why I felt as if my life was turned upside down.) I kept telling myself that this cannot be possible. I can't have these feelings and still be a Christian. This is not how I was taught. There must be something wrong with me.

I prayed and prayed that God would give me an answer, and one day I found myself walking through the doors of MCCC. I knew for the first time, in a very long time that there was a place for me in the house of God. I knew that after many trials and tribulations God had brought me home. I found a place where it didn't matter who I loved, but what did matter was my love for God.

That was five years ago, and I know more today than I did back during those struggling times, that God has called me to a wonderful ministry. She has called me to be her disciple to go out and to reach out to those who are in our community who still struggle on a daily basis, with the idea of being a Christian and being Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender.

This is why I feel so strongly about TWS. Our mission statement says: **"The purpose of The Women's Secretariat is to recognize the gifts and power that women contribute to the fellowship and to the world."**

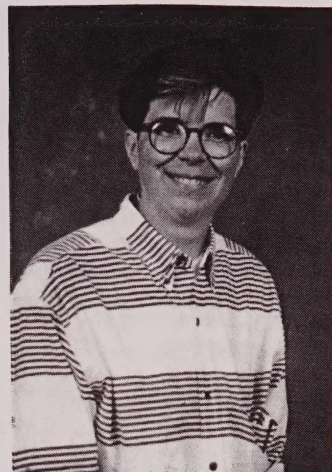
It took me a long time to receive my gifts from God, because I did not feel worthy enough to receive them. It was not until I walked through the doors of MCCC that I realized that I was worthy, and it was then that I truly felt my call to be God's servant...to reach out to those who do not feel worthy, and show them that God loves them just as they are.

I would like to share a poem with you that we read at The Women's Share at Fall Conference in Asheville:

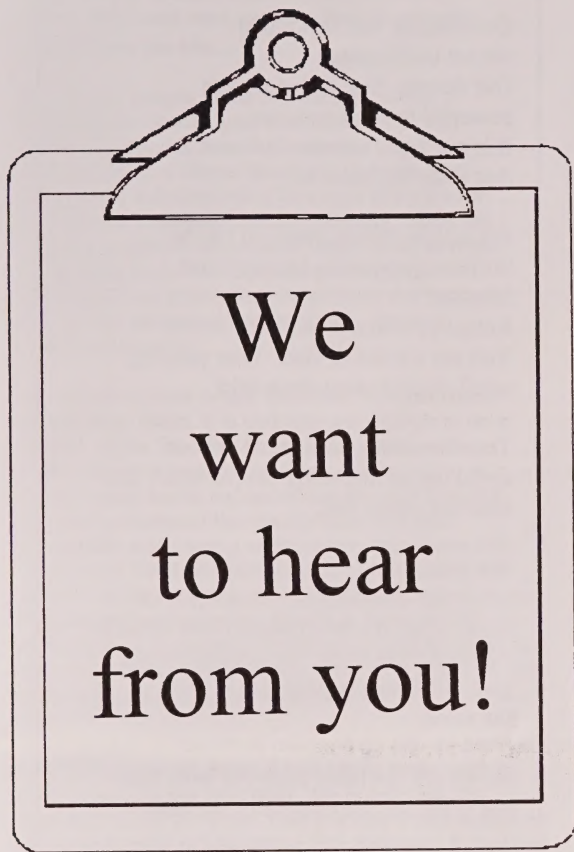
in the pattern of God's purpose
we are stitched together in caring and communion:
scraps of the lingering past,
fragments broken from future's dearest hopes;
textures of disappointment and dreams,
prints of pain and promise:
calico and corduroy,
stripes, silks, and satins —
all the colors of emotion and experience
are sewn
into a crazy quilt
of life,
patched together and transformed
into a blanket of love...
and our compassion
comforts
a cold and hurting world.

Barbara Battin

My dream for The Women's Secretariat is that we can grow from all of our experiences...that we can share our common thread of Christ's love for us, and become a blanket of love to comfort our cold and hurting world. I am excited about the things that are going to take place with the women in the GLAD District! I know God has many wonderful things in store for us. I hope and pray that you will become involved in TWS in your church, and become a part of this crazy quilt that is mentioned in the poem above.



(Continued on next page)



(Going from the Valleys in Life.....)

We are all like the different pieces of material that this poem mentions. We come from different places. We have experienced many different events in our lives. We have so much to offer. Just imagine how wonderful it would be for all of us to come together and share our experiences with each other, and the gifts that God has given to each one of us.

This is what The Women's Secretariat is all about... "recognizing the gifts and power that women contribute to the fellowship and the world." It is a time of sharing and a time of growing. **Get excited with us...get involved...become a part of The Women's Secretariat at your local church!**

Please pray with MaryEllen and myself as we begin this journey of leadership together. Pray that God will guide us to know what direction TWS needs to take in the GLAD District. Pray that we will see the visions that God would have us to see, and the knowledge to fulfill them. Especially pray that the women in the GLAD District and throughout the Fellowship may be touched by the ministry of The Women's Secretariat!

WE DO WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU....this newsletter is for you, the women of the GLAD District.

This newsletter has been discussed in several of our caucuses at District Conferences. You have asked that this newsletter become a reality...so here it is. You have asked for a way of keeping in touch with each other across our district. We hope this newsletter will provide you with the opportunity of keeping each other in touch with what God is doing in your church.

What do we want for our newsletter? We would like to hear what is going on with the women in your church. Do you have special programs for the women in your church...Potlucks, Women's Sharing, etc.? If so, share with us what programs are meeting the needs of the women in your church. We hope by sharing your information with us via this newsletter, other churches will be able to benefit from your programs as well.

What else do we want? As you can see in this newsletter, there are a few poems. Do you write? Do you have a poem you have written that you would like to share...then send it in. Maybe you have a poem that you have found that means something to you...share that with us. What has inspired you may inspire someone else. Maybe you have a devotion or meditation that holds a special place in your heart...would you be willing to share it with us? We want this newsletter to be your newsletter. If you have something that you feel other women would benefit from, please send it in.

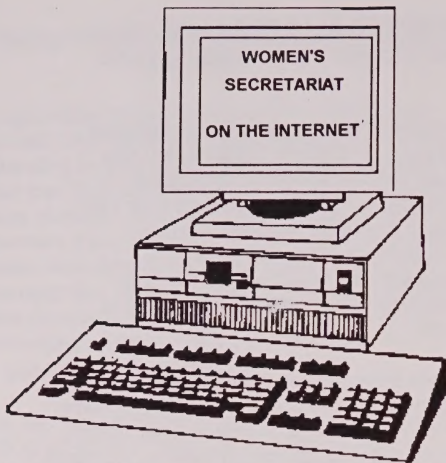
We are excited about this new program of The Women's Secretariat (GLAD District). This newsletter can be whatever you want it to be! We hope by making this newsletter a reality that you, the women of the GLAD District, will help us make it the best newsletter it can be.

We are trying to publish this newsletter once a quarter. This being our first publication, and wanting it to be the best it could be we were not able to meet our original deadline. However, our next deadline for material to be sent in is: **April 5, 1996**. We would like to have our next newsletter out before District Conference in Nashville.

You can send articles for the newsletter to:
Libby Puckett
4019 Teakwood Drive/Charlotte, NC 28217

When I am afraid,
I will trust in you.

Psalms 56:3 NIV



What an exciting idea! The Women's Secretariat on the Internet! This idea was brought to us at the Women's Share (Fall Conference) by Beverly Mitzel who is a member at MCC Charlotte. As you read this article, you will find out about the "Cyberministry" that MCC Charlotte (MCCC) is working on and how it can benefit The Women's Secretariat (TWS).

MCCC has now entered into a new and evolving trend called "Cyberministry" by establishing an on-line presence via the Internet. MCCC will be able to join several other visionary MCC churches across the world in reaching many individuals with news and information about themselves, as well as the fellowship.

MCCC has been on-line since May of 1995, when it joined a group of other MCC'ers through virtual computer chat sessions via America On Line, and also through listing information about itself GLBT computer bulletin boards. It is here that Lynn Lavner heard of our church and got in touch with MCCC about doing a concert at their church. However, more recently MCCC has shown computer users a new "identity" by creating a "home page" accessed through a graphical interface to the Internet called the World Wide Web.

Through MCCC home page, users not only access information about MCC, including Worship Services, Ministries and Outreach, Newsletters and Calendars, but they may also access an entire listing of MCC's within the GLAD District, link directly to the UFMCC Fellowship's home page, and access a wide variety of community links of interest to the GLBT community.

Early statistics have indicated that the MCCC page is being accessed as many as 10 to 15 times per day by computer users worldwide. This number is sure to increase as word is spread that the page is up and has valuable information.

There already is in place, a "link" for information relating to The Women's Secretariat. This is a place for us to include information on TWS as well as place the newsletter. All we need to do is get the newsletter up and running, and we will be able to pass it on to Beverly who will plug it into the Internet.

This is going to be a great way for us to communicate with the women in our churches all around the world! If you are on line and would like to access this page, you may access the page through MCCC's temporary URL number. Their number on the Web is: <http://www.geopages/WestHollywood/2326>

MCCC will be moving to a new address on a faster service by early spring.

If you have any questions, or need further information...please call Beverly Mitzel (704) 875-3325(h) or (704)547-2675(w) or via e-mail at: bamitzel@email.uncc.edu

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous - talented and fabulous?
Actually, who are you NOT to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world.

There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure about you.

We were born to make manifest the glory that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

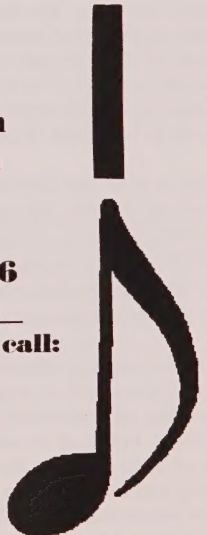
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

1994 Inaugural Speech
Nelson Mandela

LYNN LAVNER
in concert
at the Metropolitan
Community Church
of Charlotte

Friday, May 4, 1996

For more information call:
MCC-Charlotte
(704) 563-5810



"TOGETHER, women and women, men and women, men and men, we can change peoples ideas of who we are....."

Hell-o fellow people of the female persuasion. I am MaryEllen Dowdy, your new Co-chair of The Women Secretariat. I am a member of Christ Covenant MCC in Stone Mountain, Georgia, and I am also the Administrative Assistant to my Pastor Rev. Glenna Shepherd...which of course allows me to have a wealth of information, much to do, and not enough time to do it in. But, being "The Diva" (Congregational appointed name) that I am, I attend to my duties with great joy and style!...and of course competence.

I am also a member of our churches Finance Team and Worship Team. It is certainly a challenge to be a member of the Finance Team and come up with creative ways to make money, get money and keep money. I have found my own ideas about tithing and the inner workings of the church have changed dramatically since being on this team. My activity with the Worship Team brings me much pleasure and the creativity of the entire team makes our worship services very personal and magical. By virtue of my position as Administrative Assistant I somehow end up involved in much more than I ever planned to be, but I figure it's an easy ticket to heaven...so what the heck.

I have been in a committed relationship with my partner, Joy Callahan for six years, and if I don't make her too crazy, I hope for the next sixty. Joy is definitely the stabilizing factor in my life. I am the very proud mother of a seventeen year old daughter, Erin Kathleen. If God has ever blessed me, it is with this wonderful child.

I was raised in a devout Irish Catholic home the second child, first daughter of five. I went to Catholic School all my life, and pretty much bought the whole package that they sold me. I had been for a good part of my adult life what you would call a convenient Catholic, church at Easter and Christmas, and occasionally through out the year. I always felt a need to connect with a God who would love me no matter what and I also wanted the "High Liturgy" that the Catholic church does.

Communion has always been an important part for me because of my background and the belief in The Body and Blood of Christ. When I first learned of MCC and went to Christ Covenant I can't say I felt right at home but there was something there. Well, lo and behold here I am so immersed in the Fellowship that I wonder where I was before.

My spirituality comes from many different places and takes many different forms. One of the greatest sense of God's grace and love comes from my daughter, Erin. Music gives me a feeling of God's unending love and forgiveness, and serving and receiving communion is a powerful and joyous occasion for me.

As your co-chair, I have a great vision for TWS. I feel there are many areas which need to be looked at and examined by us as women and The Fellowship as a whole. One of these areas is Transgender people. Where do they belong? How do they feel about our group and being a part of it?

I would like to see workshops addressed to this issue from both men and women who are transgenering. There are many questions, I am sure, that people have regarding this issue. Lesbians are in a high risk category for breast cancer and I would like to see some workshops about this; it effects men as well as women when they lose their mothers, sisters, and friends to it.

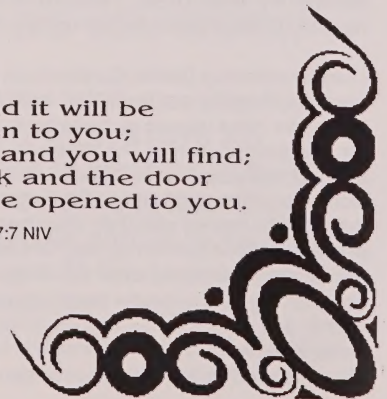
I hope that in the future the women of The Fellowship will find all the openness and love they need from The Fellowship collectively. I hope that the men will not see us as threatening and overbearing because we are outspoken and want to be heard. **TOGETHER , women and women, men and women, men and men, we can change peoples ideas of who we are** and they will come to know us as loving children of God just as we are.

I welcome the opportunity to serve you as your co-chair and I am always open to suggestions or ideas you have in regards to TWS. Please feel free to contact me at anytime, and thank you for giving me a chance to help build the vision of our future.



 Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Matthew 7:7 NIV



"When God Closes One Door, God Opens Another One"

GREETINGS MY SISTERS IN CHRIST! MY NAME IS

Wanda Y. Floyd...in the nine years of being a part of this Fellowship, I have come to truly believe those words. I stepped into St. John's MCC in Raleigh, NC the summer of 1987 and that is where I have stayed. I have seen a lot of changes in my local church, district, and Fellowship.

I grew up in a small town as a Southern Baptist and my speaking style reflects my upbringing. As a child growing up, I always felt that God had called me to be a part of the church in some way or another. As I grew up, my participation in church also grew from being in the choir, an usher, 4-H, Baptist Training Union, etc. The list can go on and on.

My time at St. John's MCC has been a true learning experience. I began attending during a transition period for the church and often times I would be the only Person of Color (POC) and/or woman. I felt like giving up alot of times, but God continued to give me strength and courage and the power to stay even when things were not the greatest in the world. I have seen the church almost double its women presence in the past two years and the presence of the POC's is also growing.

I feel blessed that I have found a place within this Fellowship where I can be a part of a growing, diverse congregation that continues to be on the forefront of things. Our church was the first church in our district to appoint a female POC as Associate Pastor (me) and is still the only one that can claim that fact. We have made deliberate efforts to reach out to the women in our congregation and community by having monthly potlucks, beach retreats (two a year), a monthly newsletter and a small group that is for women only. We also have a male Pastor who preaches on diversity and inclusivity. As a result, the presence of women continues to grow and is very stable.

At our last District Conference in Asheville, I ran for Assistant District Coordinator but was not appointed to this position. I was very disappointed and it showed. I had decided not to rerun for Lay Representative because of accepting my call into the ministry. However, **when that one door closed, God opened another one.** I am now one of six women that sit on the Facilitating Council for TWS for the Fellowship. As a result of my appointment, I was asked to share a little about my vision and/or goals for the women in this district.

I began attending District Conferences in Spring of 1990 and have only missed one since that time. As I attend, I continue to pray for more women at these conferences and especially for their participation in The Women's Secretariat (TWS). In the past few years, we have been having caucuses for the women to come and express their concerns and issues that they may be having with their churches, yet the number of present at these gatherings vary at each conference. TWS sponsored a workshop a few years ago entitled "Building Bridges" in which a female pastor of a predominantly female church and a male pastor of a predominantly male church came together to discuss how their churches made deliberate efforts to reach out to the opposite gender. It became

apparent in that gathering that one of our problems is the lack of education from on high on women issues. Meaning that if it is not preached from the pulpit, then not much will be done.

I truly feel that we need to educate our pastors and strong lay leadership about the needs of TWS and how our presence can benefit them as a church and us as a district. There were women in that workshop that questioned why they needed to be concerned about women issues or the presence of women at their churches. I was appalled that this statement was coming from another woman. It all goes back to education! We, as women, need to educate ourselves on how our gifts and talents can be used within this district. We are all strong women!

I would like to see the women own the power that God gives to us by seeking and accepting places of leadership within our local church and in our district. I would like to see more women at District Conference and participating more in the services. We continue to be the fastest growing district in our Fellowship, and I believe that we can also have the largest number of women working for God in our district.

As a part of the Facilitating Council, we are going to begin working more closely with the districts and offering our help whenever possible. I believe in this ministry. If I did not, I would not have accepted the appointment. I believe God can use each woman in this district to grow and to be about the business of sharing the Gospel with those that are hurting and lost, because My Sisters, that is what we are called to do.

Wanda Floyd

Associate Pastor - St. John's MCC, Raleigh NC

Facilitating Council for The Women's Secretariat for UFMCC

A Letter to My Sisters

*Strong sisters who have walked with me,
and wept and laughed and soared with me,
Can we not yet on this life's plane
reach out, and up and up again
until by reaching, soaring, searching
at last we find the prize of living life
through women's eyes?*

*And then by Love and Faith and Grace
we'll share with other waiting hearts
the treasures of this Women's Place.*

Deborah B. Sims



We would like to name this newsletter something other than The Women's Secretariat Newsletter.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!

We would like for you to help us name your newsletter. Do you have any ideas? If you do, we would like for you to mail them to us. (You can mail them to Libby or MaryEllen...addressess in front of newsletter.)

What do you think? Do you have a wonderful name for our newsletter? Send it in...you just might win! What will you win? If the name you have submitted should win, you will have one night of your hotel room paid at Spring Conference. (if you are unable to attend conference....other prizes will be available)

DEADLINE FOR SUGGESTIONS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY APRIL 15,1996....does that date ring a bell?

Thanks for helping us out...we can't wait to hear from you!!!!

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES
APRIL 5,1996

REACHING FOR RAINBOWS

I keep reaching for rainbows....
Thinking one God's morning
I will wake up with rainbow ribbons in my hair,
With hurts painted over in hues that only angel
wings could brush,
Black obliterated, chaos hurled beyond the
rainbow and my vision,
The world created in a myriad of colors:
The hungry fed,
The dying held,
The maimed walking,
The angry stroked,
The violent calmed,
The oppressed freed,
The oppressors changed,
And every tear wiped away.
I keep reaching for rainbows,
But instead of colors in our storm,
Gray and black infiltrate, dirtying the sky,
And I hear human voices wailing in the
darkness,
The never-ending darkness....
Just the same
I know the promise of the rainbow.
I keep thinking I'll turn a corner one day
And find a litany of rainbows
Flung across the sky,
Hosannaing back and forth
Through all the ages and
Out into eternity forever amen!
Every tear wiped away -
It's a promise -
When we become rainbows to each other.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What do you think about the first newsletter? Do you have any suggestions or ideas for us to try? We would like to hear from you!!! Write us and let us know what you would like to see in "your newsletter"....your ideas are VERY IMPORTANT TO US!

COVENANT MCC
c/o Rev. Marge Ragona
PO BOX 101473
Birmingham, Alabama 35201

L. Puckett
Chair, The Women's Secretariat
4019 Teakwood Drive
Charlotte, NC 28217



*They that wait upon the Lord
shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings
as eagles; they shall run, and
not be weary; and they shall
walk, and not faint. Isaiah 40:31*



Lord
raise The

WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT CONFERENCE CALL
JANUARY 7, 1992 - (7/1/92)

Present: Beverly Baptiste Brenda Carty
 Judy Dale Coni Staff
 LaPaula Turner Nancy Wilson
 UFMCC Staff: Ro Halford

Call began: 5:13 p.m. (17:30)
Call ended: 7:20 P.M. (19:20)

The first item was the usual "check-in." There seems to be so much going on with all of us -(we need to keep one another in prayer and in thought, constantly).

The first item of business was to make corrections, additions and comments on the final draft of the S.O.P.'s. Judy Dale and Beverly Baptiste will work on appropriate wording for WCE areas - in order not to present ourselves as a National (U.S.) organization. All else went well. Judy did a wonderful job on the S.O.P.'s - thank you.

The next item of business was the "Guidelines for District level Women's Secretariat."

Nancy Wilson had to leave the meeting because of another appointment. She mentioned that Tuesday evenings is a standing appointment - Therefore, we agreed to change the next Conference Call to a Wednesday.

We made some changes to the guidelines presented by Brenda Carty, who did a great job of pulling this information together in time for this Conference Call.

After finishing the changes, corrections and additions to the District Guidelines, we moved onto the issue of the Women's Survey.

Coni Staff will talk with Kit Cherry about the article for Keeping In Touch. Also, she will send the survey to Don Eastman, with a cover letter to be distributed with the Wednesday Letter. Ro and LaPaula will also talk with Kit regarding the Women's Survey, for any needed information, etc.

There was some discussion of developing Women's Resources, particularly for those women outside of the U.S. who want more available information. Ro volunteered with LaPaula's assistance to begin compiling Women's Resource Information. Also, Brenda Carty who is working with several lesbian and gay youth will offer resources for youth, which can be utilized by the UFMCC.

A second issue arose regarding the need and desire for womyn outside the US and Canada, to receive correspondence and support from those of us who have greater access to information. They want to be more connected to the Women's Secretariat. Bev. Baptiste will be talking with Jean White and will get a list of names and addresses for some of those women. We were asked, then, if we would individually correspond with them. There was some interest from those

Guidelines for The World Women's Secretariat

present, to participate as a correspondent. (I did not get the names of those interested).

We applauded one another on a great job - a lot of work was accomplished by all the Women's Secretariat.

The next scheduled Conference Call is April 8, 1992 - 5:30 p.m. 8 April 1992 - 17.30

See you all at General Council Meetings in March!!!

MEMBERSHIP

STRUCTURE

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

THE DISTRICT WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT OF UFMCC

Guidelines for District Level Women's Secretariat

The name of this special program shall officially be: District Women's Secretariat of UFMCC. (Preceding the word District, shall be the name of each individual District, i.e., South Central District Women's Secretariat)

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

This Department shall support all women within it's District through:

- Developing workshops/seminars for District Conferences, dealing with dynamics and interpersonal awareness (i.e. oppression - sex, race, class, age...).
- Encouraging women of different cultural, ethnic, spiritual and religious backgrounds to partake in functions on local Church, District and Fellowship levels.
- Interaction with the District Coordinator to implement and supervise womens ' Sharing and programming at District Conferences.
- Assisting and encouraging the establishment of local church chapters.
- Regular interaction and communications with those local chapters.
- Distribution of information through quarterly reports and district releases.
- Challenging any structural or individual action that prevents women's growth, welfare and safety in local churches and on a district level.

MEMBERSHIP

The District Women's Secretariat of UFMCC consists of those women who are members in good standing of a local congregation who meet the definition of member according to the UFMCC Bylaws.

STRUCTURE

The structural responsibility is vested in The Women's Secretariat (TWS) meetings and District Women's Secretariat meetings.

Meetings shall take place accordingly with each district's needs, but not less than once a year.

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The District Executive Committee is that body (s)elected by the Women (who are members in good standing of a local church body), at the District Conference, to carry out the ministry and administrative affairs of the District Women's Secretariat between meetings.

All actions of the District Executive Committee must be reported at The District Women's Secretariat meetings, and to the Executive Committee of the Women's Secretariat of UFMCC.

THE WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT
c/o UFMCC

5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 464-5100

Conference Call: 8 April 1992 - (April 8, 1992)
17:40 - 19:30 - (5:40 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.)

Those Present:

Beverly Baptiste, Judy Dale, Coni Staff
Julie Tizzard, LaPaula Turner, Nancy Wilson,
and Staff: Ro Halford

As a matter of record, where the name of the organization is required in these minutes, I will be abbreviating it as TWS. This is mostly for brevity, and consistency.

The conference call began once again, with a check-in time. Again, there is much going on in the life of the Women in the TWS. This time appears to be important for each one to share their journey's and for building relationship amongst the TWS..

The next item discussed was the matter concerning charges brought against La Paula Turner, and the process at the recent General Council. Nancy Wilson discussed the process the Council went through in reaching their decision to suspend LaPaula from all positions in UFMCC until the matter of charges brought against her are resolved. This was a unique situation, and the Council had to establish a procedure for handling it. Resolution is expected by May 25, 1992.

Note: As Chair of TWS, Coni Staff was not sent notification of this action. Discussion regarding the intent of this committee for on-going business took place, and a vote was needed. Will LaPaula remain on the Committee, or not? It was unanimously decided by the members present, that LaPaula continue to participate in the life of the Steering Committee, as a consultant. However, her voting privileges are suspended until the matter is cleared up.

The overview of the General Council meetings was given by Coni Staff, with some input from Julie Tizzard, Bev. Baptiste, and Judy Dale. This was primarily a 'progress report' of the TWS, to the General Council. The Women's Needs Assessment Survey was also included in the discussion. Coni also reported that by October 1992 the TWS needs to prepare their Goals for 1993. By March of 1993 TWS will need to present their budget to the General Council.

It was noted at this time, that the Dean of Samaritan College, Sandi Robinson, suggested that

TWS might use some of their funds to assist Samaritan with getting a Computer. Nancy Wilson said that the General Council has already begun to address this need for Samaritan College. It was also pointed out that it probably, would not be acceptable for TWS to introduce a new 'line item' on their budget.

At this time in the discussion, regarding budgeting, Julie Tizard said she would like the funds used for an In-Person meeting just prior to the next General Council Meeting. A date was then set for this meeting, for October 7, 1992. The exact time, to be announced. (General Council begins Oct. 8, 1992).

The issue of District Liaison's was discussed, next. It was noted, that all the District's do not have Liaison's and perhaps more information would encourage women to get involved. It was decided that Ro will send out the District Guidelines to TWS, again for use at District Levels, also to the District Coordinator's and present Liaison's. It was decided that the Minutes of the previous conference call and this conference call will be sent, by Ro to the TWS District Liaisons. Also, henceforth, all Conference Call/Meeting Minutes of the TWS will be sent to the District Liaisons to TWS.

Next on the agenda was the Women's Surveys. Julie Tizzard still needs to receive the remainder of the survey's from LaPaula in order to complete the process. Julie will send them to TWS and District Liaisons upon completion.

Feedback from the survey's was then discussed, and so far positive responses have been received by TWS. Julie said that MCC Las Vegas asked to use this format for their own survey for women in their area. Julie gave them permission to do so.

Areas of use were discussed in more detail such as: Lesbian newspapers/Press Releases, Ecumenical Witness and Ministry and support groups of Women Sexual/Incest Survivors. It was brought to the attention of the Committee that we need to let the participants know where and how this survey will be used, before doing so.

Next, Judy Dale said, largely due to the results of the survey, the General Council will be addressing the issue of SEXISM. This project was given to the I.C.R. Division for implementation, and they are planning a one and one-half year process to address the issue.

The Resource List was discussed, next. Ro has begun compiling resources pertaining to books and other literature for and by women. We need to also have information in other areas of women's lives,

such as Women's Liturgies and Workshops for and by women. We also need to find ways to translate TWS materials in other languages. Julie Tizzard has a resource from a Priest who is fluent in Spanish and he will assist her in translations. It was noted, that it would be preferable to have a woman translator, for the benefit of providing a safe environment for latinos, and continuity.

Next on the agenda, was the issue of corresponding with women of various cultures and languages. Bev. Baptiste will write to Beate Ebert and Rita Saage in Hamburg, Germany, and Julie Tizard will write to Susanna Cabrera Yrigoyen and Fabiana Tron in Buenos Aires. Coni Staff will be meeting with Heike Weber from Australia, during a visit to San Francisco. It is important that women from other countries have a sense of connection to other women in the UFMCC.

This, then brought up discussion of developing a brochure for TWS. We agreed that the contents would include: The basic goals of TWS, herstory of TWS, Inclusive Language information and reasons why women should be involved in TWS.

Discussion regarding the initial preparation and planning for GCXVI was next on the agenda. We were told that both Sylvanus and Philomena Maduka, from Nigeria, will be at this General Conference. Then we discussed having a special luncheon in honor of the work of ministry that Philomena does. LaPaula suggested that DPOC may want to do something special with her, as well. The issue of translation came up next. Philomena does not speak English. Nancy Wilson said she would work on finding someone for this opportunity.

The SOP's are still in stages of approval, and Ro will send out a reminder with this mailing, that any changes, suggestions and input needs to be received by Judy Dale, by June 15, 1992.

A TWS newsletter was discussed and it was decided that we do not have staff or funds for such a task, at this time.

Nancy Wilson had to leave the conference call because of the "Lenten Group" meeting at the church.

Lastly, Julie Tizard brought up the issue of Evangelism to women outside UFMCC. There was some discussion. However, no determination made at this time. It was thought that having a brochure would assist significantly in getting the word out to these women.

Coni Staff left the meeting, also. Ro mentioned that the Women's March on Washington was supported by the UFMCC. At this final note, each woman left the conference call except Julie Tizard and Judy Dale, they needed to talk some about the up-coming conference in S.C.D.

THE WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT
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Note: Correction to the November 1991 Conference Call: Julie Tizard was present.

Also: A reminder to get any corrections, additions or other pertinent information regarding the SOP's to Judy Dale by June 15, 1992. It is essential to keep this time-line for the process to be completed, in a timely fashion.

